

## Warren County Veterans Service Officer's Report for December 2012

1340 State Route 9 Lake George, NY 12845 ☼ Phone: 518-761-6342 Fax: 518-761-7683

Denise A. Di Resta, Director/CVSO at [direstad@warrencountyny.gov](mailto:direstad@warrencountyny.gov) ~ web-site: <http://warrencountyny.gov>



### COLA Passes Senate:

A 1.7 percent increase will affect VA compensation for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. The COLA bill ties the rate for veterans' COLA to the increase in Social Security compensation which is determined each year by the consumer price index (CPI). The House passed their version in July. The President is expected to sign the bill soon. The increase in benefits for 3.9 million veterans and their families will take effect December 1, 2012. Since benefits are paid retroactively, the first check to reflect the increase is due on or about January 1, 2013.

### VA REPORTS ONE MILLION COMPLETED CLAIMS IN 2012

The VA announced that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) processed over one million disability claims during fiscal year (FY) 2012. "We have made great strides, but we realize much work remains to be done to better serve Veterans," said Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "Too many Veterans still wait too long. That's unacceptable, and that is why VA has begun implementing a paperless, digital disability claims system—a lasting solution that will transform how we operate and eliminate the claims backlog." The VA reports that the month of August was the most productive for the VA in history, with a record 107,462 claims completed. This number surpassed the previous monthly record of 103,296 set in 2010. The VA reports that in addition to a high level of productivity, there was also a high level of accuracy seen with the processing of these claims, with the accuracy level rising from 83 to 86 percent since September 2011, which is determined by the VA's quality assurance program. "Our employees are working very hard to sustain this level of production," said Hickey. "This is a testament to their dedication to meeting the increasing needs of our Veterans." The VA says its goal is to process all disability claims within 125 days, at a 98 percent accuracy level, and eliminate the claims backlog in 2015.

**VA Facilities Closed from Aftermath of Sandy:** The Department of Veterans' Affairs announced several facilities closed due to the effects of Sandy in the Northeast and parts of West Virginia. Facilities with closures include:

- VISN 2: Bath, NY (Mansfield CBOC)
- VISN 3: Hudson Valley (Monticello & New City)
- VISN 3: New Jersey (Outpt at Lyons and Newark; Hackensack, Hamilton, Jersey City, Morristown, Tinton Falls; East Orange plastic surgery)
- VISN 3: New York Harbor (all open except Manhattan)
- VISN 3: Northport (all clinics closed thru Friday, no DAV transportation)
- VISN 4: Clarksburg (Tucker County CBOC)
- VISN 4: Coatesville (No MRI Wed/Thurs)
- VISN 4: Philadelphia (Ft. Dix closed; Gloucester limited phones)

For more information on the facilities listed above visit the VA website at: <http://www.va.gov/>

**VARO in NY after Sandy:** The Department of Veterans' Affairs claims office is back to work and they are diligently making progress to post claims filed.